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Issue No 122 March 2015

Gardens & Landscapes

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Villages 'in the dark' over broadband rollout

by Jack Dixon

COUNCIL leaders and BT bosses have come under fire from furious residents, who say they have been "kept in the dark" over plans to rollout high-speed broadband to remote rural villages.

Business owners based in the heart of the Blackdown Hills, where a multi-million-pound scheme to connect rural communities has not yet been extended, say they are suffering because of the poor service.

Residents from many of the 'black spot' villages packed out the Manor Rooms in Upton last week to question senior figures behind the Connecting Devon and Somerset project – a collaboration between the government, local authorities and BT to bring rural areas up to speed.

The scheme aims to provide superfast broadband to 90 per cent of premises by the end of 2016, but villages including Upton, Rawridge and Smeatharpe have been identified as "out of programme".

At the public meeting last week, organised by Upton Parish Council and chaired by Tiverton and Honiton MP Neil Parish, desperate residents from across the Blackdown Hills criticised the lack of "transparency" and called for straight answers on when the cut-off areas will be connected.

Upton parish councillor Graham Long said the village was not remote because of its proximity to the A303, and that future generations will suffer unless high-speed broadband is delivered immediately.

He said things had got worse since a public meeting was held a year ago to discuss the problems, and called for bosses to look at an alternative technology, known as 'fibre to the remote node', which uses remote 'boxes' to serve a smaller catchment area.

He said: "We have been told this is currently unavailable. My question is: why? This is not new technology. We need this now. It is already in use in France and Germany. We need this to compete with those countries."

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Consultation launched on East Devon sports pitches

by Jack Dixon

COUNCIL bosses have launched a public consultation on the latest phase of a project to improve sports facilities in East Devon, which could lead to the construction of a new multi-purpose complex at the foot of the Blackdown Hills.

Local sports clubs and other stakeholders will be encouraged to comment on East Devon District Council's playing pitch strategy (PPS) over the next few weeks.

Once approved, the strategy will help to guide investment in sports facilities for the area.

Initial proposals to build a brand new facility at Tower Cross, on the edge of the Blackdowns near Honiton, will remain part of the strategy and will be developed at the same time as improvements to existing pitches.

District councillors endorsed a draft version of the strategy at a recent meeting, after officers met with Honiton's sports leaders to hear about some of the problems facing local clubs.

Pitch provision is a major issue at Mountbatten Park, where Honiton's senior football and cricket teams currently share overused pitches.

The youth football club is also in desperate need of additional pitch space and is currently playing on poor quality fields at St Rita's.

Honiton Rugby Club has reported drainage and maintenance issues with its pitches at All Hallows and the Honiton Hornets hockey club has also expressed its urgent need for a dedicated playing facility.

The consultation will run until March 16th, at which point comments will be considered and fed into the final PPS document.

New CEO at animal sanctuary

Ferne Animal Sanctuary based at Wambrook, near Chard in Somerset today announced the appointment of Elaine Hayes as its new Chief Executive.

Elaine began her career in the water industry. After a spell in business running a consultancy, she moved into the third sector as Chief Executive of a Wildlife Trust.

Since then she has worked for other charities, most recently as Director of Living Coasts in Torquay.

Elaine said: "I am delighted to be the first Chief Executive of Ferne Animal Sanctuary in this our 75th anniversary year.

"The Sanctuary does amazing work rehoming and caring for unwanted animals. I am looking forward to developing the Sanctuary - and planning for the next 75 years!"

Nanette Wale, Chairman of Ferne's Trustees said: "The Trustees are delighted to welcome Elaine to Ferne. She arrives at a very exciting time in Ferne's life as we prepare to open our 'New Digs for Dogs' rehoming centre and begin to plan for the future.

"Elaine is very experienced in the field of animal welfare. We all look forward to working with her and implementing her ideas."

Ferne Animal Sanctuary is a registered Charity open to the public all year round, except Christmas Day and New Year's Day. They rely solely on donations. To support their "New Digs for Dogs" £1million project for 2014/15 and learn about all their events please visit www.ferneanimalsanctuary.org or call 01460 65214.



Ferne CEO Elaine Hayes

Villages 'in the dark' over broadband rollout

■ CONTINUED from page 1

Councillor Long was also critical of the tendering process, which has allowed BT to "call the shots", and that there should be plans in place for 100 per cent coverage.

Somerset County Councillor Ross Henley said CDS has an "urban" rollout plan that is unsuitable for rural communities, and that the Blackdown Hills is being "seriously disadvantaged".

"We have heard again and again about the success of this project, but that is not what I am hearing from my constituents", he said.

"It is almost like the 'emperor's new clothes' - if we say it has been successful for long enough then people will start to believe it.

"Tens of millions of pounds of taxpayers' money has gone into this and many are not getting any benefit at all."

Steve Horner, representing Yarcombe Parish Council, said it was important to get behind the CDS programme but that residents expected transparency and honesty.

And Paul Spearing, from Chardstock Parish Council, said a number of businesses were suffering from "ridiculously slow" broadband speeds. He said local people need to see "action" and not be "fobbed off with excuses."

One resident said his son had almost missed the deadline for his university application because of the poor connection, and had had to ask 12 neighbours until he found one with fast enough speeds to upload his paperwork.

Councillor Andrew Leadbetter, Devon County Council's cabinet member for economy and growth, said an "incredibly negative spin" had been put on the rollout and that CDS was doing its "absolute best" to bring high-speed broadband to the area.

He said: "We are doing our absolute utmost to see if we can get Uptonery included sooner rather than later. Broadband is being rolled out - maybe not quick enough for people - but we cannot do it all overnight. Everybody cannot be first."

Paul Coles, BT's South West regional partnerships director, added that the provider would step up its coverage if take-up improved in areas that have already been connected.

"We are reviewing the plan for Uptonery to see whether it can be done, but I do not have an answer yet - we will communicate an answer when we know it", he said.

"I understand the frustration. If we can get take-up going [in the areas that are connected] then BT will provide even more coverage, over and above the 95 per cent.

"It is important that we send the message out to people who have got access that they take it up. We will push things as far as we can.

MP Neil Parish said things were "moving forward" and that he was confident high-speed broadband would be delivered in the "reasonably near future".

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▲ Andrew Clements

Cash to 'kick start' road scheme

by Jack Dixon

COUNCIL cash has been set aside to “kick start” long-awaited improvements to the A30/A303, which could open the door to significant upgrades along the stretch of road that runs through the Blackdown Hills.

Devon County Council has announced it will pour more money into design work and technical studies for a programme of improvements to the key road.

A total of £2.25 million will be spent on preparations for two major road schemes, including the A30/A303 between Honiton and Ilminster.

And it is hoped that the latest financial investment will prompt the government to stump up the extra cash to complete the project over the next decade.

Councillor Andrew Leadbetter, the council's cabinet member for economy and growth, said the “vital” funding would unlock growth opportunities and support Devon's economic development.

He added: “Funding for this work is an important step forward to get initial designs off the ground in the coming financial year.

“We need to negotiate with the government and the Highways Agency on the detail of the A30/A303, and we will be meeting with Transport Minister John Hayes to discuss our priorities in getting this underway.”

Business leaders have called for ministers to finish the job, after the government outlined a multi-billion-pound package to improve transport links between London and the South West before Christmas.

“In these tough times, small businesses need all the help they can get”, said Colin Wright, chairman of the chamber of commerce in Honiton.

“It is well-documented how much of a boost these improvements will give to the town centre – it's just one of the many ways we are trying to bring more visitors into Honiton.

“We have been calling for action on this issue for many years and it is now more important than ever that we see some real progress.”

It is understood that plans for a widened road, rather than a dual carriageway, will be presented to transport ministers this week.

Council bosses also want to develop overtaking lanes and make a series of improvements to junctions along the route.

They believe the scheme will improve safety while slashing journey times, encouraging visitors into the South West.

The total cost of the project is estimated to be around £220 million and significant government investment would be needed to follow through with the plans.

Local MP Neil Parish, who also serves in the Department for Transport, said: “I am delighted that this bottleneck through the Blackdown Hills is receiving

much-needed investment to improve journey times for road users.

“This government is investing £2 billion to transform the whole A303/A30/A358 route into a new strategic corridor to the South West.

“We need transport infrastructure fit for the twenty-first century and these improvements to the A303/A30 are good news for road safety and good news for Devon's economy.”

Record breakers to reach new heights

A TEAM of experienced skydivers is looking for hundreds of adrenaline junkies to help them set a new world record at Dukeswell airfield, near Honiton, this summer.

Skydivers will jump from a height of around 15,000 feet in June, in a bid to complete the most tandem jumps ever recorded in a single day.

The marathon 24-hour challenge, organised by Skydive UK, will require a total of 333 daredevils to sign up, and there are still around 200 places available to members of the public.

If enough volunteers come forward, organisers believe they can top the current best of 281 jumps – set by the team at Skydive UK last year – and land an official Guinness World Record.

“We have the experience in hosting massive events like this, but this year we want to go just a little bigger to break the record again”, said Jason Farrant, managing director of Skydive UK.

“Skydiving is our world and we would like to see more and more people getting involved in it.

“Almost anyone can skydive as long as they are over 16 years of age, and experienced instructors will be looking after the jumpers. All you need to do is relax and enjoy the most amazing rush of your life.”

Skydive UK is one of the largest skydiving schools in Europe and gives 3,000 people the chance to perform a tandem freefall every year.

Each of the participants will leap from a height of 15,000 feet – the maximum distance an amateur can dive without an oxygen supply.

Daredevil jumpers will enjoy about 60 seconds of freefall time, with a further five minutes under canopy once the parachute is released.

Many of those who have already signed up are helping to raise money for charity by collecting sponsorship money ahead of the record attempt.

And Mr Farrant says the event could raise around £100,000 for various good causes, if it gets enough support from local people.

He added: “Last year, the first plane went up at 6am and the last landed with the sun setting at 10pm. One of the participants liked it so much he went back up and jumped three times!”

The challenge will be overseen by expert judges to



Skydiving school Skydive UK is on the lookout for adrenaline junkies to help them beat their own world record.

make sure the record is officially set, guaranteeing a place in the Guinness Book of Records.

Registration for the event, which takes place on Saturday June 20th, is now open to members of the public. For more information visit www.skydiveukltd.com

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News in brief ...

● A NEW website for Kentisbeare www.kentisbeare.net, has been launched.

Designed to act as an online hub for the local community, it was launched by the parish council, but is about much more than council business.

The site provides a village diary, news, history, a blog about local life, a photo gallery and a business and services directory.

Council chairman, Jonathan Wadsworth, explained: "We wanted the website to be interactive, to have all the latest news and to provide a focus for existing and future parish residents. We thought hard about the design and asked local people what they would like to see on there. It's a wonderful place to live - the new site really celebrates that and puts us on the online map".

Local businesses are being encouraged to feature their services in the online business directory. In fact, for businesses that don't already have a website, www.kentisbeare.net offers them the chance to have their own web page, where they can advertise their services, contact details and photos.

People can contact the Council via the website or by emailing info@kentisbeare.net, but it has also set up Kentisbeare Parish on Facebook, hoping it will encourage people to get in touch using social media, posting their own photos, news and information: www.facebook.com/kentisbeareparish.

● THE Combe St. Nicholas Parish History Group are holding a meeting on Monday, March 9th when Simon Jennings of Phoenix Engineering, Chard, will be giving a talk about the company's history from 1891 - 2015.

The meeting is to be held in Combe St. Nicholas Village Hall and starts at 7.30pm. There will be a very quick AGM first - £2 for members, and £3 for visitors. Everyone is very welcome.

● PARISH councillors will be at the village market in Hemyock on Saturday March 21st to offer more information to residents about becoming a councillor ahead of the elections on May 7th.

A Natural Future for the Blackdown Hills

A N exciting new community wildlife project is being launched on the Blackdown Hills, on the border of Devon and Somerset. Blackdown Hills Natural Futures aims to discover and record the diverse range of wildlife in the area and equip people with the skills they need for its future conservation.

The three-year project is managed by the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and other supporters. The project will encourage people to discover more about local wildlife, share their findings, and take action to look after the natural habitats in their own communities.

Blackdown Hills Natural Futures Manager James Maben commented: "The Blackdown Hills support a fascinating diversity of species and habitats, and we want to help people rediscover these special qualities



and champion local conservation in the long term. The community nature projects we are supporting will develop ideas such as wildflower meadows on village greens, managing parish road verges and hedgerows for wildlife, nature trails and community orchards."

The Natural Futures' project team will help 15 local communities turn their ideas for wildlife projects into reality. There will also be opportunities for nine recent

ecology or land management graduates to gain essential field skills and survey a wide range of important wildlife sites across the AONB. Discoveries made through the project including photos and film clips will be shared through public events and a new website later this year.

Blackdown Hills Natural Futures officer Conrad Barrowclough added: "Our first identification skills training programme for local people and recent ecology graduates will start in May. If you have an area of land which you think may be valuable for wildlife and you would like a free survey carried out, we want to hear from you."

Nerys Watts, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South West England, said: "The Blackdown Hills pres-

ent a quintessential image of the English countryside although there is still much to discover and record about the landscape's heritage, habitats and biodiversity. Working with local communities and volunteers this project will enhance our understanding of the area and so help to conserve and protect it for the enjoyment of present and future generations."

The Natural Futures team would also like to hear from people who have ideas for community nature projects, recently qualified graduates wanting to start careers in ecology, and local people looking to improve their wildlife identification skills. Email blackdownhills@devon.gov.uk or call 01823 681937 to register your interest or to find out more about Blackdown Hills Natural Futures. Alternatively visit www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk for more details.

● THE Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership is seeking a contractor to initiate and produce 20 short film clips for incorporation into the Blackdown Hills Natural Futures project resources.

The contractor will interview local people, including farmers, and wildlife/heritage experts and professionals about the Blackdown Hills countryside to generate fun, interesting and informative film clips that help people to learn more about the nature around them and the landscape and management that supports it.

A key part of the contract will be to also deliver sessions with two local primary schools to produce at least four of the film clips. During the sessions, children will interview older people from their communities, working farmers and local wildlife/heritage professionals to produce short films for online use.

The budget available for this work is in the region of £7,000.

The tender document can be downloaded from www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk, the deadline is midday on Wednesday, March 11th 2015.

For more information contact James Maben: 01823 681937 or james.maben@devon.gov.uk



JAMES Maben and Conrad Barrowclough

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Spring cleaning volunteers at Clayhidon

A GROUP of 12 volunteers donned their Marigolds to spend three hours on a cleaning blitz of Clayhidon Parish Hall at the beginning of February.

Their rewards were hot bacon butties made by Sandra Aldworth - and a glimpse of history.

Doug Goodship was clearing rubble in the back yard when he discovered an old well and hand pump, presumably dating back to the building's Victorian origins as a primary school.

Gareth Weekes, parish hall committee chairman, said: "The hall needed some TLC and it was great to see most of the committee and other volunteers turn out on a Saturday morning.

"We are especially grateful to a very kind Wellington window cleaner Daniel Taylor. He made a superb job of cleaning the windows inside and out. If anyone needs a good window cleaner, he's your man - telephone 07854 117814."



A DOZEN volunteers turned up to help with a cleaning blitz at Clayhidon Parish Hall. They discovered an old well behind the hall and Doug Goodship tried to get the pump working.



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Get your business in the new Blackdown Hills Directory

THE new Blackdown Hills Directory for 2015 will be delivered in July.

With a door-to-door 27,000 Royal Mail circulation, over 300 businesses will be featured and there is still time to get your entry in as the closing date has been extended to March 18th.

The directory has a new design, new colour pages, new photography

and new community information. Advertisements start from £45 for BHBA members and businesses will also be featured online at www.blackdown-hills.co.uk. For more information contact Val Baker on 01823 681484 or email bhba.org.uk



**Blackdown Hills
Business Association**



HEMYOCK

THE February meeting of Hemyock WI was held in the Forbes Lounge, where the president Lyn Taylor, welcomed 22 members including two new ladies, Julie and Elaine.

It was agreed that the celebratory meal at The Catherine Wheel was a success. Hemyock had lost a skittles match against Bishopswood Ladies but the four members who had attended the Beauty Day in Exeter had an enjoyable time.

Arrangements were made for the county quiz where Hemyock will be hosting one of the areas and entering two teams themselves later in the month.

Members were reminded that the WI are holding a sausage and mash lunch on March 14th. This will be held in the Parish Hall; ore volunteer cooks are needed. This will be to raise funds for a bursary to help with the cost of sending a member to Denman College on a course of their choosing.

Lyn then introduced Terry Wetherfield, who had come to entertain and inform with a talk entitled 'In The Name Of My Ancestors'.

Terry said he had not given much thought to his surname until he retired. He did much research and said

that surnames were first used in Europe in the 11th century.

He visited the Family Record Centre in Kew and made use of the Census and the records made by the Mormons. He found it interesting but not easy as spelling was not always correct.

Terry himself had lived near London and many of his ancestors had also lived around London. There had been a wheelwright, a tallow chandler, a sexton at St Brides and a surgeon.

He concluded his talk by dressing up as some of these ancestors he had discovered, including the surgeon, complete with tools of his profession, wearing a 'blood-splattered' white coat! He was thanked by Lyn.

Terry judged the tea cup competition, awarding first to Wendy, second to Annette and third to Judith. Marie came first with an iris in the flower competition.

The next meeting will be in the Forbes Lounge on Tuesday, March 3rd at 7:30pm, when members will learn how to give their homes the 'WOW Factor' by Sam Elliott-Smith.

The competition is for the prettiest vase, as well as the flower of the month. Visitors will be made very welcome. Phone Lyn on 01823 680104 for more information.



BISHOPSWOOD LADIES report

A LARGE group of members and friends turned out on a very cold evening for the February meeting, which started with Tricia Taylor listing the various activities which had taken place in January.

The Bells had rung at Braemar Day Centre and at The Firs in Taunton, and it was reported that last year £400 was raised through performances and coffee mornings – £300 of which will be given to the Childrens' Hospice.

The skittles played Hemyock and won by 16 pins. The ramblers group, led by Linda Gower, enjoyed bright sunny weather for their walk from Ilminster along the cycle path and back over the fields. The Scrabble group continue to meet every Monday at 2pm in members' houses.

Margaret Harper then displayed and talked to the meeting about her fused glass jewellery.

After taking early retirement Margaret searched for a craft hobby with which to fill her time, and once she saw some dichroic glass jewellery she decided that making such wonderful jewellery would be her new occupation.

Dichroic glass displays two different colours by undergoing a colour change in different light conditions and patterns can be built up by putting fine layers or small pieces of differently coloured glass on to a base.

This glass can also be obtained in powder form and has the decided benefit to would be murderers of not showing up in post mortems!

Unfortunately buying a kiln for £1,000 was the first necessity for Margaret since heat is needed to fuse the glass and change the colours.

Every new piece is an experiment as Margaret cannot work to a set formula, so each finished piece is unique.

Margaret finds this so exciting that she frequently gets up at 4am, when the kiln has adequately cooled, to see what new wonder she has created!

She sells her pieces at craft fairs and gives the proceeds to charity, her current charity being the Beacon cancer centre at Musgrove Park Hospital.

After her talk Margaret did a brisk trade, with many members purchasing items of jewellery at very reasonable prices.

A chat over tasty refreshments provided by Penny Gale, Angela Naylor and Rosie Viant completed the evening.

The March meeting will be replaced by the annual dinner, this year at the Candlelight Inn.

ANNE ROBINSON

■ The AGM of the Blackdown and East Devon Woodland Association takes place on March 24th at The Candlelight Inn, Bishopswood at 6pm.

Guest speakers are Kate Tobin from East Devon AONB, talking about woodland grants and Adam and Sophia talking about wildlife conservation in woodlands.

Work for Devon Wildlife

DEVON Wildlife Trust is looking for friendly, enthusiastic and confident people to take on a new challenge in 2015, and help Devon's biggest wildlife conservation charity recruit new members.

The membership recruiter position has never been more valuable to DWT, as membership is the only reliable source of income for the charity to be able to continue helping wildlife in Devon.

DWT's 49 nature reserves across Devon provide habitats for a host of threatened and rare species including dormice, otters and greater horseshoe bats. Membership allows the charity to

continue the habitat management for this precious wildlife to thrive in Devon.

Hours are flexible and earning dependent on hours worked. Basic pay is £8.50 per hour, or 38 per cent commission of the annual subscription value, including Gift Aid, of each confirmed membership, whichever is the highest at the end of each month.

An additional 10 per cent commission can be earned for exceeding monthly targets.

For more information about the role, and how to apply, visit www.devon-wildlife-trust.org/job-vacancies

BLACKDOWN HILLS GARDENING CLUB - February 2015

FEBRUARY'S meeting began with Graham Salmon's welcome and notices followed by Jane Hunt with information on various planned summer visits, which can be viewed at www.upottery.com (click on the BHGC link).

Speaker Jeremy Wilson presented 'The Scented Garden'. Our sense of smell is the most powerful which triggers memory.

Plants provide scent to attract insects for pollination, some examples being lavender, daphne, jasmine, viburnum, stephanotis and lily of the valley amongst others.

Usually flowers are either white or yellow, not bright gaudy colours, to save the plant's energy.

Liz Tucker and Gill Dennis offered refreshments, the raffle was drawn and Jeremy sold his scented plants from his nursery before the meeting closed.

The club meets again on Wednesday, March 18th in Church-in-ford Hall from 7:30pm, to hear the head gardener from River Cottage. All are welcome.

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School pupils launch their own rocket

WILLOW Class pupils at Offwell Primary School were very excited to launch a rocket.

Headteacher Anne Billington explained: "Their class topic is space and they have been working towards this exciting event since the start of term. They made their own rockets and were joined by the rest of the school and parents to watch the launch.

"After a safety briefing, teacher Mr Dunning hit the ignition button and the rocket took to the sky whereupon a parachute opened bringing the rocket to a gentle landing in front of the delighted observers. "Younger children were inspired to make their own rockets out of cardboard cylinders and other materials and Willow Class will be visiting the Norman Lockyer Observatory this month."



HERE WE GO: A big crowd assembled for the launch as the rocket took to the sky

'Outstanding' at Combe St Nicholas Primary

COMBE St Nicholas Primary school was delighted to receive an 'outstanding' judgement in their statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools last month.

In the report the inspector commented: "Pupils mirror the excellent Christian role models set for them by the staff. They appreciate the extent to which staff will go to ensure that they are well cared for and participate in an enriching curriculum."

She also stated that the pupils

love school and say that "learning is fun but challenging and if you are having difficulties, then teachers know exactly what to do and take you on a different route."

"Pupils are very effectively supported and encouraged to raise their aspirations. Consequently they are successful and all groups make very good academic progress.

"This demonstrates how the school is continuing to develop and improve since the last Ofsted

which judged the school as Good, but with many outstanding features."

Lesley Katner, headteacher, said she was very proud of all that the school had achieved and would like to thank all staff and members of the school ethos committee who made this outcome possible, working in partnership with the board of governors, local clergy and the local community.

■ ALADDIN proved to be popular this year and was the choice of as Cloverleaf Productions in Combe St. Nicholas.

Set in Old Peking, this traditional pantomime had all the ingredients for splendid entertainment, as Abanazar (John Attree) planned to use Aladdin (Sally Nex) to find the magic lamp that would give him unlimited powers.

The plot was helped along by Aladdin's mother, the buxom Widow Twankey played by Bob Dunn and his daft brother Wishee Washee (Maggie Goodall). All Aladdin really wanted to do was marry Princess Mandarin (Abi Cousins) but her father, the Emperor (Neil Lane) was far too protective and commanded her handmaiden So-Shy played by Helen Rose to guard her at all times.

When Aladdin kissed the princess, the Emperor got the comic Chinese police on the case (Ruby Nex, Kelly Boyland and Martin Wale), and chaos ensued! Abanazar took advantage and tried to work his evil schemes but in pantomime there is always a happy ending!



READY FOR ACTION: Widow Twankey (Bob Dunn), Abanazar (John Attree), Aladdin (Sally Nex) and Wishee Washee (Maggie Goodall) in costume at rehearsals.



■ KILMINGTON Players are pictured presenting a family favourite pantomime in Sleeping Beauty. The Royal Court enjoyed the christening and 16th birthday of the beautiful Princess Rose before she was tricked into pricking her finger on a long-forgotten spinning wheel. Would the Princess Rose live to find true happiness? The cast comprised some regular faces, returning locals and more than 25 children.



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At MNR Mowers we offer a collection and delivery service for all customers in the East Devon area whether you are buying new equipment or are having your machinery serviced.

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Gardens & Landscapes

How to make the most of your garden layout

WHETHER your garden is the messy remains of a previous owner or whether you are beginning with a blank canvas in a new home, you'll need to decide what you want from your new outdoor space. These days, you can get anything from a traditional cottage-style garden to an ultra-modern design of hard landscaping. Think carefully about how you're likely to use your garden, and this will help determine the type you should work on creating.

Work with what exists

It's tempting to raze everything to the ground and start afresh, but you should be prepared to adapt what's already in your garden and to enjoy the process of transformation. A scraggly group of shrubs might provide a much-needed note of maturity in your new planting scheme, once they've been properly pruned. Always be realistic too about what you can manage. If you have work or family commitments, choose low-maintenance plants and features or all your hard work will go to waste.

Getting the look right

Do you long for your garden to be a lush oasis of colour and scent or would you prefer something sleek and minimal? Choosing your style will help narrow down what features might be suitable for your garden. For a tropical garden you'll have to think carefully about plants that look exotic but can survive in the wet British weather. For a contemporary garden you might think creating slate and stone features.

Protecting your privacy

Your garden is usually a place you will visit to get away from it all, and that means making sure it's private. High fences will keep out nosy neighbours, but they will also cut down on natural light. Shrubs are a good option for creating a softer boundary but if they're not evergreen, they won't be nearly so bushy in the winter months.



Be yourself

Remember, it's your garden, so it needs your own personal touch. Having said that, there's nothing stopping you from getting inspiration by visiting public gardens, keeping your eyes open while you're out walking, stealing ideas from family and friends or hanging out at the local garden centre. Soak up the inspiration wherever you find it.



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Mole Avon

All you need for the garden from Mole Avon

AT MOLE Avon Town & Country Stores you will find all you need for your garden this spring.

The branch, at Station Yard, Axminster stocks a wide variety of gardening products, from bulbs, vegetable and flower seeds, to composts, growing media, plants, seed potatoes and tools. In fact if you need it for the garden, you'll find it at Mole Avon!

Why not grow your own potatoes? You don't need a huge garden - try growing them in large containers or potato growing bags on your patio. We have a wide range of first early, second early, salad and main crop seed potatoes in stock including four varieties that have been awarded the RHS Award of Garden Merit.

In store for a limited time only there are four new gardening products available: multi-purpose compost, mini bark chips, organic garden compost and a grow bag. 50% of the sales of these products will be donated

to local charity Hospiscare. There are also great multibuy deals on the composts. So hurry - they are only available while stocks last!

Mole Avon Town & Country Stores is open Monday to Friday 8am to 5.30pm and Saturday 9am to 4pm and selected bank holidays.



▲ Pictured is the garden area at Mole Avon Town & Country Stores

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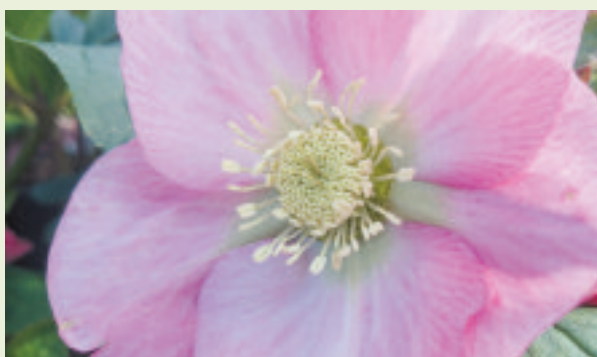
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Gardens & Landscapes

Willowbrook Nurseries & Garden Centre

ALTHOUGH the weather is still in Winter, now is the time when everybody can plan the garden for the year ahead. Willowbrook Nursery and Garden Centre have a range of seed potatoes, onion sets and shallots available along with bare-root soft and top fruit to help you 'grow your own'. The range of bare-root hedging is an ideal way to create either a native or formal screen and now is the best time to plant. Our range of trees, Winter heathers and hellebores are ready to add structure to your garden and make it look fantastic. After the planning, make time for a relaxing cup of tea and something to eat in the Café and tearoom and then browse our very own wineshop 'Winesolution' and look at the very colourful fish in 'Richards' Aquatic Centre. Find Willowbrook situated between Taunton and Wellington on the A38 or at www.willowbrooknurseryandgardencentre.co.uk



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A rare opportunity

BLACKDOWNS Early Music Projects (BEMP) will present their first event of 2015 in the clear, resonant acoustic of Culmstock Church on Sunday March 1st at 6.30 pm.

The programme is called Amor vince ogni cosa (Love conquers all) in which popular music of 17th and 18th centuries in Italy and France will be performed by talented singers invited from throughout the UK and Holland working with musical director JanJoost van Elburg and four top flight instrumentalists, Julia Black and Ben Sansom (baroque violins), Henrik Persson (viola da gamba) and Taro Takeuchi (theorbo and baroque guitar).

The programme includes works by Monteverdi, d'India and Charpentier, specially written for entertainment at court, with the dialogue portraying ancient Greek myths - shepherds, nymphs, gods, broken hearts, bears, wolves - they are all in there! Don't miss this rare opportunity to hear early music of this kind performed locally.

Tickets at £12 (£6 students, free to under 12s) are available from Taunton TIC 01823 336344, direct from BEMP 01884 849172 or their website www.blackdownsearlymusic.co.uk.

what's on

in and around the Blackdown Hills

Mad March at the Beehive



FLAMENCO dancing at the Beehive

IT'S difficult to believe that this busy, bustling building serving Honiton and all of the surrounding villages in the Blackdown hills, is almost a year old.

The centre is incredibly busy with courses; training opportunities, dance classes ranging from street, to ballet, modern, line dance and tap and the wonderfully sociable Le Roc.

The monthly folk and acoustic nights in the bar are rammed with amazing local talent, young and old, as are most of our gigs and comedy shows with many local artists.

There are also some great exhibitions in the gallery, which is currently showing photographs in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Exhibition.

High quality music gigs coming up include folk legend Peter Knight in Gigspanner, the wildly exuberant Police Dog Hogan with banjo playing Guardian columnist Tim Dowling, feel-good, infectious world folk from The Hut People and local lads Cole Stacey and Joe O'Keefe in 'India Electric Co.' launching their new album at the anniversary gig on April 4th.

There is the much anticipated Spring Ceilidh with Rough Music, the local 35-piece Wren Folk Orchestra coming on Saturday March 7th, when experienced caller David Faulkner will lead the dancing at this family friendly event.

In March and April there are also willow workshops, making spring plant supports and small willow flowers and dragonflies with Jenny Knight, plus fabulous Flamenco and Bollywood dance workshops with Karina Gracia.

For more details of what's happening at the Beehive contact 01404 384050 www.beehivehoniton.co.uk

WILLOW workshops
with Jenny Knight

diary dates

Saturday, March 7th Spring Ceilidh with Rough Music, the local 35 piece Wren Folk Orchestra. Experienced Caller David Faulkner leads the dancing at this family friendly event at Honiton Beehive Centre.

Saturday, March 14th -The Producers Acoustic Show, Robert Sewars Hall, Curry Rivel, Somerset. TA10 0HD Doors 7.15pm Start 8pm Advance tickets £10 from village PO or [/www.mojopromo.co.uk](http://www.mojopromo.co.uk) or at Black Cat Records, Taunton.

Sunday, March 15th - The Barn @ Square+Compass, Windmill Hill, Nr Ilminster, 01823 480467 TALON - The Acoustic sessions. Doors 8pm, start 9pm Tickets online from www.mojopromo.co.uk or at Black Cat Records, Taunton.

Sunday, March 15th - BON JOVIE (tribute!) Adv £12 Door £14 Venue doors 8pm start 9pm The Barn @ Square + Compass tickets available now from the venue, collect in person or phone to pay by card. Tickets also available online from www.mojopromo.co.uk or at Black Cat Records, Taunton.

Friday, March 27th

Clive Carroll - A Thousand Years of Music Clayhidon Parish Hall, 7.30pm Tel: 01823 681047

If you are holding an event in the Blackdown Hills and would like it included as a Diary Date in the paper please email the details to alex@tindlenews.co.uk. Don't forget to include the date, time, place, organiser's name and a brief description of the event.



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The Beehive ♦ Honiton's Community & Arts Venue

Peter Knight's Gigspanner Sun 1st Mar 8pm Tickets: £14

Led by Steeleye Span's legendary fiddle player Peter Knight, Gigspanner flirts audaciously with Eastern European, French, Cajun, African and Aboriginal influences, transporting you with blistering pace on a musical world tour.

Police Dog Hogan Fri 6th Mar 8pm Tickets: £10

Their live shows are exuberant, accomplished, stirring and funny, mixing country-fried heartbreakers, belting anthems and foot-stomping sing-alongs. Great songs, great musicians & their live shows are really, really good fun. Guardian columnist Tim Dowling to be seen wielding his banjo!

Spring Ceilidh Sat 7th Mar 7.30pm Adult £8, Child £5, Family of 4 £25

Rough Music are an energetic 35 piece Wren folk Orchestra based in East Devon. The group make a stonking, irresistible foot-tapping sound and will be playing local music from East Devon, tunes from the UK and melodies from across the Atlantic.

The Hut People Sat 14th Mar 8pm £8 in advance or £10 on the door

The Hut People have proved to be one of THE most unique, entertaining and best-loved acts on the UK folk scene today. This is high-octane feel-good music from a very likeable duo who have the ability to get the whole audience involved and loving it - before the end of the first tune!

What We Did On Our Holiday (12A) Honiton Community Cinema Fri 20th Mar 7.30pm Tickets: £5 on the door

A hugely enjoyable British comedy starring Rosamund Pike, David Tennant and Billy Connolly, which has real dramatic bite in its agonisingly truthful depiction of family problems.

Cirkus Spektakular by Angel Heart Theatre

Sat 28th Mar 4pm Tickets: Adult £8, Child £6, Family of 4 £25

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Chardstock - £599,000

A stunning 4 bedroom spacious family home with study/5th bedroom. Finished with a mix of engineered wood flooring and carpet throughout, this individually designed property features a striking specification, including full height glazing to the front, bespoke glass and oak staircase leading to the first floor and a vaulted ceiling to the spacious master bedroom. Garage, double carport, Close to the village centre, nestling on the edge of the Blackdown Hills and recognized as an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty,



Combe St Nicholas - £349,950

A delightful detached 16th Century thatched cottage on the edge of this favoured village. The property offers an abundance of character features including two stunning inglenook fireplaces and exposed ceiling beams to most of the ground floor rooms. It is now in need of cosmetic updating, which would greatly enhance the property. Three bedrooms, lounge, dining room, study, kitchen / breakfast room, bathroom, gardens, garage and parking. The property benefits from oil fired central heating.

LET US TAKE YOUR PROPERTY TO OUR LONDON BUYERS

London Property Exhibition 2015 "The Blackdown Hills"

As members of the Guild of Professional Estate Agents, our properties are marketed through the Guild's prestigious offices in Park Lane London throughout the year. However in addition we hold regular Somerset Property Exhibitions during which we completely take over and staff the Guild's offices. This provides us with a unique opportunity to sit down with London Buyers and discuss their individual requirements, effectively taking our property portfolio to London.

Our Spring exhibition this year is to be held on 19th March with a special focus on the Blackdown Hills.

A SPECIALIST MARKETING SERVICE FOR RURAL PROPERTIES

At Derbyshire's we recognise that village and rural properties require specialist marketing, and have a department which just specialises in these properties covering the villages and hamlets between Yeovil and Taunton. Our service was recently described by Marcus Whewell, CEO of the Guild of Professional Estate Agents, as *"uniquely filling the gap between where the High Street Agents finish and the Country House boys begin"*.

If you think your property would benefit from our specialist approach to rural properties please contact :
Marcus Bond from The Village & Country team on 01460 63600.

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'experience the difference'



West Hatch

£770,000

An opportunity to acquire an attractive farmhouse found on the edge of the Blackdown Hills with adjoining barn in circa.16 acres. The cottage style home offers good accommodation with four bedrooms, two bathrooms/shower rooms, four reception rooms and a modern kitchen. Call 01823 252 500



Wiveliscombe

£325,000

Ideal Holiday Home . Chapel Gallery is a stylish conversion of a detached stone chapel with contemporary modern interior. Many original features . Kitchen, sitting and dining areas, bedroom suite 2/3 further bedrooms, bathroom Call 01823 252 500 EPC D.



Pegasus Court

£195,000 - £425,000

With prices starting from £195,000 Pegasus' new two bedroom apartments are light, modern and double glazed throughout. They have incorporated the latest designs including well-planned accommodation layouts and contemporary bathroom designs whilst maximising on space. Call 01823 252 500



Westonzoyland

£550,000

An extremely generous period home situated in this quiet yet thriving village. Excellent access to the local larger towns of Street & Bridgwater. Generous sized rooms throughout including a 27ft Drawing Room, Cinema along with generous gardens and double garage. EPC F Call 01823 252 500



Heymock

£515,000

Sunny Corner is a detached residence that has been extended over the years to provide a substantial home comprising five double bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and separate WC on the first floor and a substantial sitting room with an additional dining room, and study to the ground floor. C.1.5 acres. Call 01823 252 500



Mark, Somerset

£550,000

A detached house located on the edge of the popular village of Mark. Set in 0.33 acres of landscaped gardens . Entrance hall, cloakroom, three reception rooms, fitted kitchen breakfast room, utility, conservatory, master and guest bedrooms en suite, two further bedrooms and family bathroom. Call 01823 252 500

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BEDS - CARPETS - CHAIRS - FURNITURE - RECLINERS

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MARCH IS NATIONAL BEDMONTH

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WITHIN 25 MILES
IF GOODS OVER
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Salus Viscoool Pocket 2000 4'6'' Divan Set
The comfort revolution – cool by nature
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Harrison Monaco 3200 5' Divan Set
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furniture handmade in Britain.



Duchess Low End
Bedstead
3' £170 4'6'' £207
5' £235

Superior quality
British made pine

Luxury Adjustable beds from
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THE SOFA / SOFABED RANGE

Siena – Oak bedroom furniture, a unique and simple
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Cornish painted furniture with oak tops – an
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paints available

We have had so many customer requests for sofa beds with matching sofas and chairs we have been adding to our range to give the biggest choice of sofas/sofabeds in the area, suitable for spare rooms but also for everyday use in the main lounge this highly versatile range is proving very popular. During March special bed month prices apply

Sofas from £649/Sofabed from £790



Chair bed from £359/Sofabed from £499



Sofa from £699



Sofabed from £935

We are confident that our prices are highly competitive, but in the event that you have seen the same items for a lower price at another store or online please tell us and we will do our level best to match the price, because we want you to be our customer. We free deliver goods over £150. Within a 25 mile radius.